



THE

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By Mr. TOWN,

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—*Hominem pagina nostra sapit.* MART.

WE, whose business it is to write loose essays, and who never talk above a quarter of an hour together on any one subject, are not expected to enter into philosophical disquisitions, or engage in abstract speculations: but it is supposed to be our principal aim to amuse and instruct the reader by a lively representation of what passes round about him. Thus, like those painters who delineate the

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scenes

scenes of familiar life, we sometimes give a sketch of a Marriage *à la mode*, sometimes draw the outlines of a Modern Midnight conversation, at another time paint the comical distresses of itinerant Tragedians in a barn, and at another give a full draught of the Rake's or Harlot's progress. Sometimes we divert the public by exhibiting single portraits; and when we meet with a subject where the features are strongly marked by nature, and there is something peculiarly characteristic in the whole manner, we employ ourselves in drawing a full length. In a word, we consider all mankind as fitting for their pictures, and endeavour to work up our pieces with lively traits, and embellish them with beautiful colouring: and though perhaps they are not always highly finished, yet they seldom fail of pleasing some few at least of the vast multitude of Critics and Connoisseurs, if we are so happy as to hit off a striking likeness.

THERE is perhaps no knowledge more requisite, and certainly none at present more ardently sought after, than the Knowledge of the World. In this science we are more particularly expected to be adepts, as well as to initiate, or at least improve our readers in it. And though this knowledge cannot be collected altogether from books, yet (as Pope says) "Men may be read as well as books" "too much;" and it is to be lamented, that many, who have only consulted the volume of life as it lay open before them, have rather become worse than better by their studies. They, who have lived wholly in the world without

without regarding the comments on it, are generally tainted with all its vices; to which the gathering part of their instructions from books would perhaps have proved an antidote. There indeed, though they would have seen the faults and foibles of mankind fairly represented, yet vice would appear in an odious, and virtue in an amiable light; but those, who unwarned go abroad into the world, are often dazzled by the splendor with which wealth gilds vice and infamy, and being accustomed to see barefoot honesty treated with scorn, are themselves induced to consider it as contemptible. For this reason I am a good deal offended at the ingenious contrivance of our modern novelists and writers of comedy, who often gloss over a villainous character with the same false varnish, that lackers so many scoundrels in real life; and while they are exhibiting a fellow, who debauches your daughter or lies with your wife, represent him as an agreeable creature, a man of gallantry, and a fine gentleman.

THE world, even the gayest part of it, may be painted like itself, and yet become a lesson of instruction. The pieces of *Hogarth* (to recur to the illustration I first made use of) are faithful delineations of certain scenes of life, and yet vice and folly always appear odious and contemptible. I could wish it were possible to learn the knowledge of the world without being “ hackney'd in the “ ways of men;” but as that is impracticable, it is still our duty so to live in it, as to avoid being corrupted by our intercourse with mankind. We should endeavour to guard against fraud, without becoming ourselves deceitful;

ful; and to see every species of vice and folly practised round about us, without growing knaves and fools. The villainy of others is but a poor excuse for the loss of our own integrity; and though, indeed, if I am attacked on *Hounslow-Heath*, I may lawfully kill the highwayman in my own defence, yet I should be very deservedly brought to the gallows, if I took a purse from the next person I met, because I had been robbed myself.

THE Knowledge of the World, as it is generally understood, consists not so much in a due reflection on its vices and follies, as in the practice of them; and those, who consider themselves as best acquainted with it, are either the dupes of fashion, or slaves of interest. It is also supposed to lie within the narrow compass of every man's own sphere of life, and receives a different interpretation in different stations. Thus, for instance, the man of fashion seeks it no-where but in the polite circle of the *beau-monde*, while the man of business looks no farther for it than the *Alley*. I shall beg leave to illustrate this by two characters; each of whom, though diametrically opposite to the other, has acquired a thorough Knowledge of the World.

SIR Harry Flash had the good luck to be born before his brother *Richard*: consequently the heir to the estate was bred a gentleman, and the other condemned to plod in the dull drudgery of business. The merchant was sent to learn accompts at the Academy upon *Tower-Hill*, and the baronet had the finishing of his education in

France.

France. Sir Harry is now a most accomplished fine gentleman, is an excellent judge of fashions, and can calculate the odds at any game as readily as *Hoyle* or *De-moivre*: the Alderman is the most knowing man upon *'Change*, and understands the rise and fall of Stocks better than any *Jew*. Both of them know the world; but with this difference, that one by his consummate knowledge has run out a large estate, while the other has raised a plumb by it.

BEFORE I conclude, it will be proper to take notice of the great improvements made by our modern ladies in this part of their education. The pretty creatures were formerly kept at home, and employed in the domestic cares of good housewifery: they were taught as much as possible to shun the company of the men, and knew no more of the world than a cloistered Nun. But these restraints are now happily removed by the present mode of education. The little lady, instead of being sent to the boarding-school to learn needle-work, is introduced to the politest routs and assemblies, and taught to make one at the card-table: she is carried about to *Vauxhall*, *Ranelagh*, and other genteel places of amusement; and besides these, if we add a trip to *Bath* or *Cheltenham*, there is no doubt but she is completely versed in the Knowledge of the World. This, we must own, is very necessary to be attained by ladies of fashion: but it is with great concern that I have observed the inferior rank of females frequenting the same schools, and learning the same lessons. Some have purchased their knowledge very dearly at the

expence of their reputation, while others have laid out their whole fortunes to acquire it; and I could not but smile the other day at reading an advertisement in the public papers, begging our charity for a poor distressed gentlewoman, who had formerly lived well, and seen a great deal of the World.

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